

BLOCK MANAGEMENT BASICS

(February 2014)



**What
Block
Management
is
NOT!**



Block Management
is **not**

a program
in which

Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
buys, rents, leases, or
otherwise purchases
hunting access
for hunters

Block Management
is **not**
a program
designed to help
landowners
maximize revenue
from providing
public access
to
public wildlife

What Block Management IS!



Block Management **IS**

a program
for landowners
who allow public hunting
and request assistance
in managing hunters
and
some compensation
for potential impacts
that may result
from allowing
public hunting.

Block Management

IS

a program

designed to provide

OPPORTUNITY...

the most opportunities

for landowners

and hunters

to participate

in the program.

**The contract between
the landowner and FWP
determines the conditions under
which public hunters may come
onto enrolled land**

- *Private land remains private land under the control of the landowner;*
- *Private land does not become de facto public land;*
- *FWP assumes no interest in land through this contract;*
- *The contract allows FWP to enforce the BMA rules;*

- Every contract is unique to the farm or ranch.
- This is not a one-size-fits-all program.
- Landowners set the conditions under which the public is invited onto enrolled land.
- Landowners can determine how many hunters may come onto the land, when and where the hunters may hunt, how hunters can obtain permission, and what hunters may hunt.

If yes, please provide new total acres: Private _____; State School Trust* _____; BLM _____; USFS _____; Other(Identify) _____. **Attach map showing exact BMA boundaries.** *Inclusion of accessible state school trust lands requires a public review under ARM 26.3.199A(3). Please attach Supervisor's Decision Notice and indicate date review process completed: _____.

Department Contact _____
(Please Print)

II. BMA RULES

1. Is written permission required? Yes _____ No _____
 2. Are reservations taken? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, When _____
 3. Are times designated for granting permission? Yes _____ No _____ If Yes, what are they? _____
 4. Is this a walk-in only area? Yes _____ No _____
 5. Are parking areas designated? Yes _____ No _____
 6. Is the number of hunters/parties per day limited? Yes _____ No _____ (No. Hunters/Day _____ or No. Parties/Day _____)
 7. Huntible Game on BMA: Elk Deer-M/WT Antelope Turkey Upland Gamebirds Waterfowl Other _____
 - *8. Are there any available species/gender in huntible numbers which may NOT be hunted? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, list species/gender which may not be hunted _____
 - *9. Is the BMA closed during any legal fall hunting season during the term of this contract? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, list closure dates _____
- * NOTE: Any restrictions cited in #8 or #9 require written approval of the Regional Supervisor. Signed BMA Restrictions Form must accompany this document.
10. Is outfitting permitted on this BMA? Yes _____ No _____ If Yes, Outfitter Name: _____
License# _____ (NOTE: Outfitting may only take place on a BMA if public recreation and hunting opportunities are not restricted and the Cooperator and Regional Supervisor approve the activity in writing. Consent forms MUST accompany this document.)

Other rules: _____

BLOCK MANAGEMENT:

What incentives can a landowner receive?

- **Limited liability protection (*state law applies – no fee charged, landowner held to lowest level of legal obligation to provide for safety or welfare of hunters*);**
- **Cash compensation (up to \$12,000 annually) to offset potential IMPACTS that may result from public hunting activities;**
- **Department assistance in managing public hunting activities (seasonal staff hired);**
- **Livestock loss reimbursement;**
- **Complimentary non-transferable hunting and fishing license (*may designate immediate family member or full-time farm/ranch employee*)**

BLOCK MANAGEMENT:

What is the rationale for the current compensation system?

- **MCA 87-1-267 (5) states “...Benefits will be provided to offset potential impacts associated with public hunting access, including but not limited to those associated with general ranch maintenance, conservation efforts, weed control, fire protection, liability insurance, roads, fences, and parking area maintenance...”**
- **A citizen’s committee (HB195 Incentives Advisory Committee), developed recommendations, which were adopted by FWP Commission and incorporated into program ARM rules;**
- **Recommendations were based on several key factors:**
 - **Impacts vary from season to season, and situation to situation;**
 - **The more hunters, the more impacts;**
 - **Incentives should be distributed fairly among program participants, without attaching more “compensation value” to particular game species or types of hunting;**
 - **Landowners who place greater restrictions on legal species or legal fall seasons should receive less compensation;**

BLOCK MANAGEMENT:

How is compensation calculated?

EXAMPLE

*Example: A BMA, where all available game species may be hunted during entire legal fall seasons, that experiences 300 hunter days, is eligible for \$3,727.50 payment**

$$\begin{array}{rccccccc} (\$6.60) & + & (\$2.20) & + & (\$2.20) & = & \$11 \\ \text{Basic} & & \text{No Species} & & \text{No Season} & & \text{Total Impact} \\ \text{Impact} & & \text{Restriction} & & \text{Restriction} & & \text{Payment} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{rccccccc} \$11 & \times & 300 & = & \$3,300 & + & \$250 & = & \$3,550 \\ \text{Total} & & \text{Hunter} & & \text{Subtotal} & & \text{Enrollment} & & \text{Subtotal} \\ \text{Impact} & & \text{Days} & & & & \text{Payment} & & \\ \text{Payment} & & & & & & & & \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{rccccccc} \$3,550 & + & \$177.50 & = & \$3,727.50 \\ \text{Subtotal} & & (5\% \text{ weed payment}) & & \text{Total Payment} \end{array}$$

How has payment changed over time?

- 1995 - \$10 hunter day impact payment; \$8,000 annual cap;
- 1999 – cap increased to \$12,000;
- 2001 – 5% weed payment;
- 2009 - \$11 hunter day impact payment (average 9% increase per landowner); \$400,000+ total cost

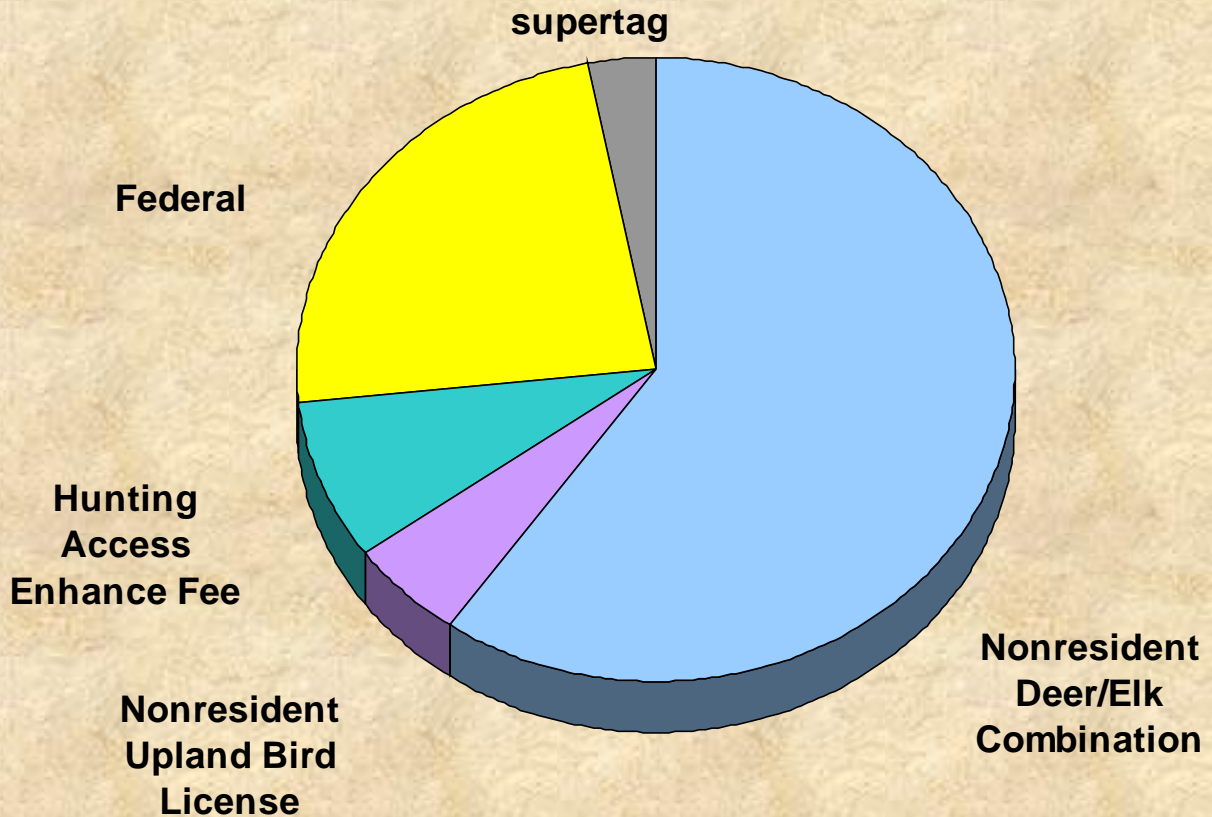


How is Block Management Funded?

- **Nonresident deer/elk combination licenses (25% of fee earmarked -2011);**
- **Nonresident upland bird license (\$55 earmarked – 1999);**
- **Resident & Nonresident Hunter Access Enhancement Fees (\$2 res./ \$10-nonres.-2001);**
- **Supertag – lottery with unlimited chances (\$5 each) for Supertag (5 Supertags – 1 for each of 8 species: elk, deer, moose, sheep, goat - 2005; added (antelope, mountain lion, bison) – 2007;**
- **Federal PR dollars (varies annually);**

BLOCK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM SUMMARY OF FUNDING SOURCES*

Fiscal Year 2014 (projected) - (2013 Hunting Season)



• Nonresident Deer/Elk Combo License	\$4,610,000
• Nonresident Upland Bird License:	\$415,000
• Hunting Access Enhancement Fee:	\$650,000
• Federal Funding	\$1,815,000
• <u>Supertag Chances:</u>	<u>\$235,000</u>
TOTAL	\$7,725,000

BLOCK MANAGEMENT

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

BMA # _____

**Hunting with
Written Permission
Only.**

Contact: _____



This Program funded by Resident and Nonresident Hunters.





Most BMAs require walk-in-only hunting; some may have game retrieval provisions that allow hunters to use vehicles to retrieve game during designated hours or upon obtaining permission from the landowner.



Some BMAs offer travel only on designated routes, and either require hunters to park in designated parking areas or park anywhere along authorized roads or trails.



Most BMAs provide opportunities for deer, elk, or antelope as primary game species.





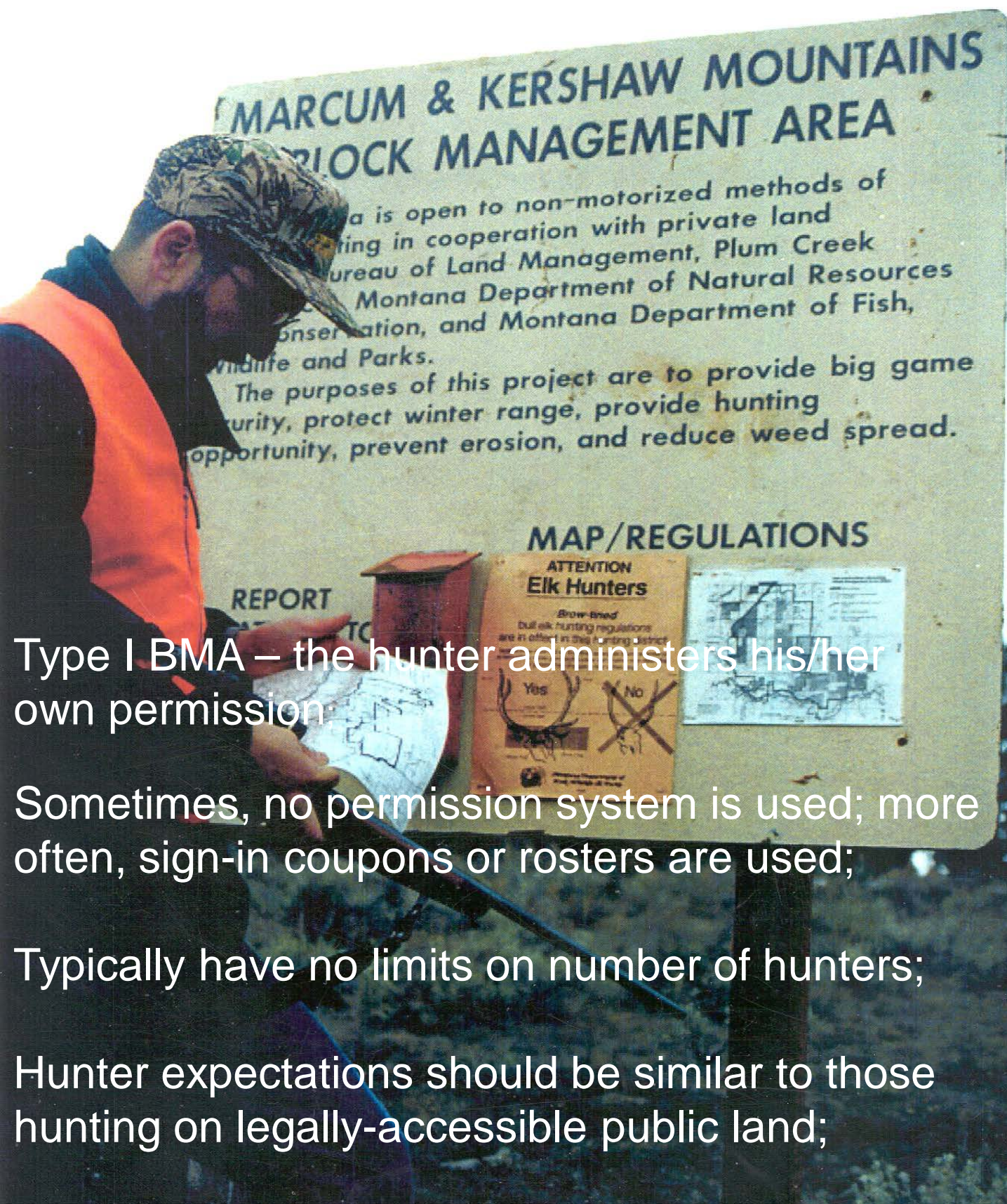
Many BMAs offer opportunities for upland birds or waterfowl.





Some BMAs offer special opportunities for youths, seniors, or hunters with special needs, or provide unique hunting opportunities not readily available elsewhere.





Type I BMA – the hunter administers his/her own permission;

Sometimes, no permission system is used; more often, sign-in coupons or rosters are used;

Typically have no limits on number of hunters;

Hunter expectations should be similar to those hunting on legally-accessible public land;



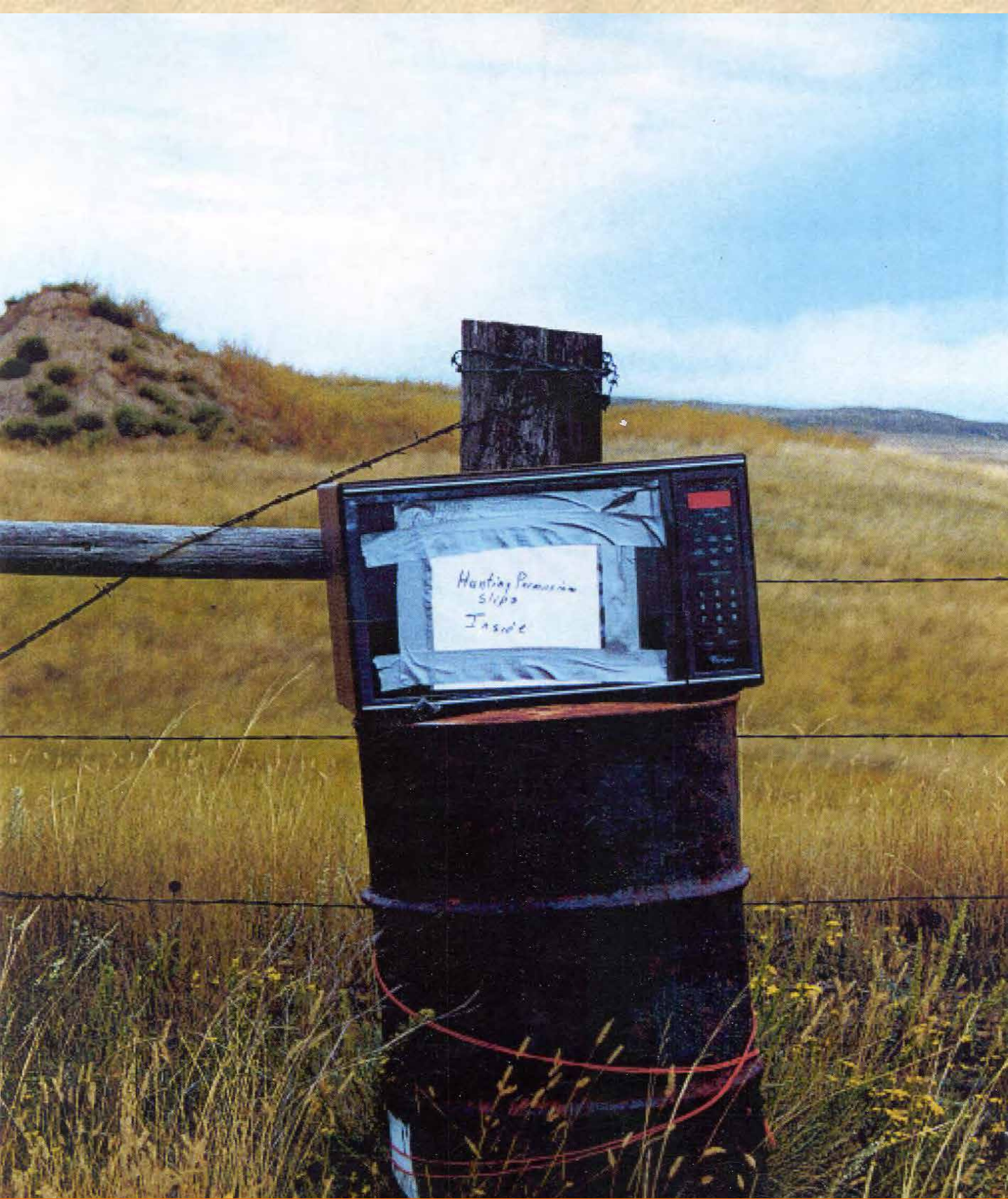
Type II BMAs – someone other than the hunter issues permission.

Sometimes limit hunter numbers, require reservations, assign certain hunting areas.

FWP and landowners use a variety of reservation systems, including direct contact, local drawings, & phone contractors; FWP will be piloting internet systems in the future.

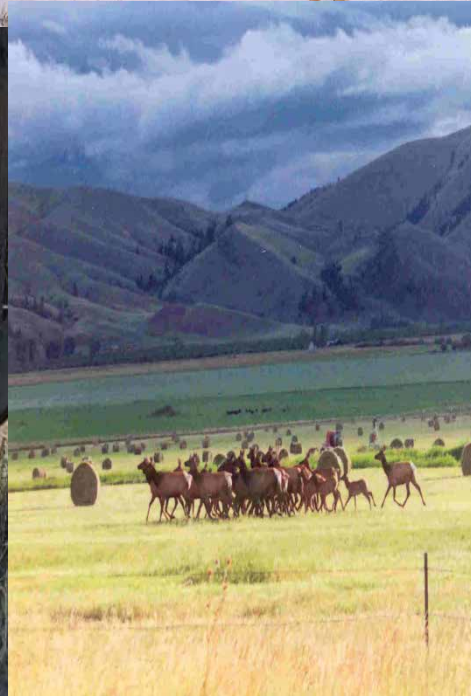


**Some BMAs are combinations of Type I and II;
If the landowner is home, he/she issues permission;
If not, the hunter administers his/her own
permission;**



And some hunter management systems, especially when the program was new, were rather basic!

Why do landowners enroll land in Block Management?



Landowner Re-Enrollment Checklist

- Instituted on a voluntary basis in 2006;
- Intended to be completed by landowner prior to signing a contract to re-enroll;
- Asks landowner to identify goals for enrolling and whether or not those goals are being met;
- Also asks whether landowner is satisfied with how game is managed, satisfied with hunter numbers and how hunter activities are managed, and satisfied with program benefits, to include compensation and services. Asks for suggestions if not satisfied.

Landowner Re-enrollment Checklist – 2007

(R5 – 77 landowners responded)

- 40 – game management/game damage reduction;
- 38 – providing manageable public access;
- 23 – compensation;
- 6 – vehicle travel management;

60 – *indicated goals were being met;*

7 – *indicated goals were not being met;*

6 - *indicated goal or goals were somewhat being met;*

Landowner Re-enrollment Checklist – 2007

(R5 – 77 landowners responded)

- **Are you satisfied with the number of hunters and hunter days on BMA?**
86% - YES; 14% - NO;
- **Are you satisfied with the way hunter activities are being managed on the BMA?**
95% - YES; 5% - NO;
- **Are you satisfied with the way game numbers are being managed on the BMA?**
75% - YES; 25% - NO;

Some Observations Based On Trend Data



- *Some large acreages being replaced by small acreages;*
- *Some large ranches enrolling smaller portions – diversifying operations;*
- *Some long-time cooperators dropping out for a variety of reasons;*
- *Possible increase in number of cooperators dropping out to make political or policy issue statements?;*
- *Program has averaged 3-5% attrition of cooperators annually since 1996;*

Why do landowners get out of Block Management

2007

- 16 – property sold – new owner didn't enroll;
- 11 – contract changes – FWP or cooperator chose not to re-enroll;
- 10 – cooperator dissatisfied with compensation or too many hunters or not enough game harvested or hunter behavior or all of above;
- 3 – issues unrelated to program (2 CRP rule changes/1 county road issue);
- 5 – unknown reasons;
- 4 – cooperator wanted to lease to outfitter;
- 3 – cooperator wanted to lease to individual or group;
- 1 – FWP could not locate or contact cooperator
- 2 – death or illness/property not re-enrolled;
- 2 – neighbor problems – safety/different kind of access across fence;
- 2 – “program doesn't fit with ranch goals;”
- 1 – “want to reserve hunting for family”

60 (4.43% of total 1244 total cooperators)

2013

- 19 - property sold or lease was dropped
- 10 - FWP declined re-enrollment due to ranking or failure of Cooperator to return contract by deadline
- 13– payment too low , not enough game, property overhunted, poor hunter behavior , or all of above;
- 6 – issues unrelated to program (wolves, bison and FWP land acquisitions
- 5 – unknown reasons
- 2 – Landowner decided to lease
- 1 - Frustration in not drawing either-sex elk permits and the compensation not being worth the time required in dealing with hunters
- 1 - Fire danger
- 1 - Safety reasons

58 (4.72% of total 1230 cooperators)

**What do the hunters and
landowners who
participate in the
program have to say
about the current
program?**



Summary of Research



Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks

Block Management Landowner & Hunter Evaluations from the 2009
Montana Hunting Season

HD Unit Research Summary No. 31

Michael S. Lewis and Alan Charles

June 2010

Administered by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), Montana's Block Management Program was established in 1985 with three main goals:

1. To maintain public hunting access to private and isolated public land.
2. To help landowners manage public hunting on lands under their control, and provide benefits to offset the impacts of those public hunting activities.
3. To help FWP accomplish its mission of managing wildlife resources. In a state where nearly 65 percent of the land is privately owned, FWP depends on public hunting to manage populations of deer, elk, and other game animals.

A total of 1,274 landowners were enrolled in the program in 2009, comprising more than nine million acres of Block Management Areas (BMAs) across the state. Approximately 85,000 people hunted a BMA in 2009 (which resulted in more than 460,000 hunter days on all BMAs combined).

To measure the success of the program, FWP periodically conducts landowner and hunter evaluations. Two separate surveys were conducted following the 2009 Montana hunting season:

- **Landowner Evaluation.** All landowners enrolled in the program in 2009 were sent a survey by mail.
- **Hunter Evaluation.** A randomly selected sample of 761 people who hunted on a BMA(s) in 2009 were sent a survey by mail.

These two surveys were nearly identical replications of similar surveys conducted following the 2003 and 1996 Montana hunting seasons (Charles & Lewis, 2004; Charles, 1997). Hence, for the most part, results obtained from the 2009 surveys are directly comparable to 2003 and 1996 survey results.



Overall, there was an excellent response to both 2009 surveys. A 66 percent response rate was achieved from the landowner survey. A 60 percent response was achieved from the hunter survey. These response rates are considered to be very high for mailback surveys of this type.

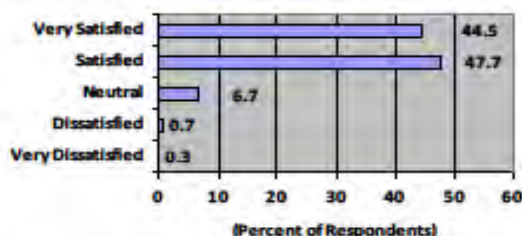
This research summary highlights the key findings from both the 2009 landowner and hunter evaluation surveys. Wherever possible, survey results obtained in 2009 are compared to those results obtained in 2003 and 1996.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2009 LANDOWNER EVALUATION

When asked how satisfied they were with the overall Block Management Program, 92 percent of the landowners who responded to the survey indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied (see Figure 1 below). This compares to 93 percent in 2003, and 80 percent in 1996.

Figure 1. Response to: "How satisfied are you with the overall Block Management Program?" (2009 Landowner Evaluation)



Most of the landowners (78 percent) reported the Block Management Program is an important or very important way for them to manage game numbers on their BMA(s). Related to this, 63 percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the results of the program in terms of managing game numbers on their BMA(s) in 2009 (see Figure 2 on the next page). This compares to 63 percent in 2003, and 60 percent in 1996.

FWP Human Dimensions Unit conducts periodic programmatic hunter & landowner evaluation surveys (1997, 2004, 2010)

BLOCK MANAGEMENT

Hunter Comment Card Summary

2012

Total Cards Received: 15,429

Total Hunters Who Observed Game: 10,402 67%

Total Hunters Who Bagged Game: 3,541 23%

Total Hunters Rating Experience Satisfactory: 12,540 81%



BLOCK MANAGEMENT AREA Harvest Report/Comment Card

BMA Name/Number: _____ Hunt Date: _____

BMA Location: (Circle one region number)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7



1. Did you observe the game species
being hunted? yes / no

2. Did you harvest any game? yes / no

3. Game taken (species & sex): _____

4. Please rate your BMA hunt: Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

COMMENTS: _____

Please return a completed, postage-paid card after each BMA hunt.
Information will be used to evaluate the BMA. Thanks!

12.4.204 (b) CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION:
“a potential exists for a cooperative relationship between the department and private landowner or landowners for long-term management projects and program...”

Since 1996, the program has experienced an average annual attrition rate of landowner participation of 3% - 5%, resulting in 95% - 97% of landowners re-enrolling in the program;



So what lies ahead?....

- \$4.00 gasoline?
- Energy development?
- Amenity buyers?
- Aging population?
- Hunter recruitment?
- Increasing elk/deer populations?
- Horn hunters versus meat hunters?
- Landowners & hunters increasingly willing to charge or pay to hunt?



Challenge: What constitutes success?

- *Number of acres enrolled?*
- *Kind or location of acres enrolled?*
- *Number of hunters who hunt?*
- *Number of hunters who kill game?*
- *Number of hunters who have certain kind of hunt?*
- *Number of landowners enrolled?*
- *Number of dollars/services landowners receive?*
- *Number and/or kind of animals harvested?*
- *Length of time landowners stay in program?*

*Perhaps all of that and
more...*



Currently, Block Management is all about OPPORTUNITY

OUTDOORS SCRAPBOOK



Connor Mora, 12, of Great Falls, and his grandfather Harold Mora show off the bucks they shot Nov. 11 at the Sieben Ranch. COURTESY PHOTO

Successful whitetail hunt is family affair

By Tribune Staff

Connor Mora, a 12-year-old from Great Falls, shot his first whitetail on the Sieben Ranch on Nov. 11.

He was accompanied on his hunt by his Grandpa Harold Mora, his dad Tom Mora and cousins Tyler Bolton and Spencer Hart, all of Great Falls.

**NO
HUNTING
OR
TRESPASSING**



Hunting

WANT WHITETAIL HUNTERS! We have a few cancellation hunts for this Fall. Price reduced, big Saskatchewan Canadian Deer. for info call Don, 406-749-6500 or Jesse 406-749-1755

RESERVE YOUR HUNTING DATE
"FEE HUNTING"
AREA 411
900 acres.
Call Mr. Ray for price and map today!
252-9400 or 698-4932

WANTED: HUNTING
Leases, trophy mule deer/whitetail starting 2007 and archery elk starting 2008. Top dollar. Montana Outfitter, insured. Paul 1-800-381-2743

Favorite hunting spot overcrowded? Join Mus-selshell Hunt Club! Enjoy regulated private access & plentiful wildlife. Reasonable membership dues, flexible day fees or season rent. Families welcome. 406-439-4821 or 206-266-3515

What does the future hold for Montana's hunting heritage and traditions, and what role can FWP hunting access programs play in that future?